

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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### PRISONERS OF SILENCE.

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#### CHAPTER XXXIV.

"HAVE you seen him?"

"For a moment only. He told me he would rather be alone."

The question and answer, low-toned and brief, passed on the pavement outside the house in which North Branston lived. The questioner, Archdeacon French, had come up to the steps just as the young doctor who had been North's best man came out at the door, and had accosted him with that singular directness which only a common concern creates. It was seven o'clock in the evening; the evening of the tenth of September; the evening, as it seemed to these two men, of one of the longest days they had ever known. Five hours had passed since the wedding party had broken up; and even after five hours no very clear conception as to the sequence of events, as they had followed immediately upon Mrs. Vallotson's loss of consciousness, was possible to those upon whom had fallen the task of quelling the excitement and confusion that had ensued. That Lady Karslake had left the church at once; had left it on a brief word from North Branston as he held her hands for one instant in his own, was all of which Archdeacon French himself was certain, until the moment when a deep quiet had fallen upon the empty church, and he stood at the door of the vestry where the still unconscious woman lay.

Mrs. Vallotson had been taken to her hotel, attended by the young doctor whose services to North on that day should have

been of so different a nature. Archdeacon French and North had waited there, in a silence which the former could not break, until word was brought them that consciousness had returned. And then North, putting aside the words the other tried to speak with a stiff movement of his hand, and something in his eyes that seemed to plead for toleration, left the house alone, without a word.

A pause followed the answer to Archdeacon French's question; a pause, eloquent on the part of both men, of strongly moved feeling. Then the Archdeacon said, "How is Mrs. Vallotson?"

The young doctor's tone and manner were rather constrained as he answered.

"Such an attack as hers," he said, "would have prostrated most women. But Mrs. Vallotson is a lady of extraordinary force. She is practically recovered."

"Have you just come from her?"

The younger man bent his head.

"Yes," he said in a low voice. "There is no necessity for my seeing her again, and I thought that Branston would wish to know."

"Did she send him any word?" asked Archdeacon French in the same low tone.

"No!" The young man hesitated for a moment, and then added hurriedly, "but he knows that she is well enough to see him."

There was another eloquent pause, and this time the silence was broken by the younger man.

"Are you going up, sir?" he asked.

Archdeacon French brought back his troubled, kindly gaze from the far distance on which it was fixed, and looked at his companion.

"No," he said quietly, "not now, he is best alone until it is over."

As if by common consent, and without

another word, the two men turned and walked slowly away down the street.

Half an hour passed, the evening shadows were beginning to fall, and a soft breeze had sprung up. The street, a quiet one at all times, was quite empty when the door of the house opened and North Branston came out. The face was absolutely without colour, and it was very quiet; quiet with that terrible quiescence which tells of tension which has passed beyond the relief of any outward manifestation. His deep-set eyes had sunk a little in his head, but they were steady and almost dull. He walked down the street with a regular mechanical stride, and turned into the road leading to the hotel in which Mrs. Vallotson was stopping.

It was about a quarter of an hour's walk. His pace never varied, neither did his expression alter in the least. Having arrived, he sent up his name to Mrs. Vallotson's private sitting-room, waited quietly until his messenger returned, and then followed him upstairs.

It was the ordinary hotel sitting-room, a little shabbier and more uninteresting than usual perhaps, and rather untidy, partly, as it seemed, by reason of rough and continual pacing to and fro, which had displaced the furniture, and partly by reason of certain traces of Mrs. Vallotson's indisposition—a medicine bottle and wineglass on the table, a shawl flung down on a chair, a heap of tumbled pillows, and so forth. It was furnished with a round table, a sideboard and a chiffonier, a suite of chairs, and a sofa. The sofa was so placed against the wall that it faced the door. And on the sofa, directly confronting North as he entered, supporting herself heavily with one hand on the seat, as though she had sat down suddenly and involuntarily, was Mrs. Vallotson.

The waiter who had announced North withdrew, shutting the door noiselessly behind him. For a long moment not the slightest sound broke the dead silence of the room.

But that Mrs. Vallotson's stillness was temporary and abnormal, the result of some momentary and inexplicable fascination, was obvious in every line of her figure. The change that had come upon her in the course of the past few hours was extraordinary, first of all by reason of the impassable gulf which it fixed between the immovable, impassive woman of the past few weeks, the strongly controlled woman of all the years that were gone, and the

woman of the present. It was as though in the interval of unconsciousness all the barriers of her nature—barriers alike instinctive and deliberate—which had held down and held back the real bent of the woman, had been obliterated once and for all, leaving free and unrestrained all the violent and unrefined passion that lay behind. Her face seemed to have grown coarser; the strong set of the mouth, relaxed and weakened, no longer held in abeyance those subtle suggestions of something blunt and unrefined within. Her whole expression was one of rage and hatred, half sullen half reckless, alike impotent and defiant. Her hair, put up, as it seemed, by hands that trembled, was loose and disordered. Her dress, unfastened at the throat as though the swelling muscles would bear no pressure, had a dishevelled air. Her whole appearance as she sat there, staring at North with hot, bloodshot eyes, was inexpressibly wild and terrible.

It was Mrs. Vallotson who broke the silence. She seemed to wrench her hold from the sofa as she rose, with aimless violence, to her feet.

"You've come!" she said hoarsely. "I wondered how soon!"

North Branston had not moved. As he met the passion of vindictive hatred in her face his own had grown a little stiller; but that was all. Of the bitterness and the antagonism, which the presence of the woman before him had never hitherto failed to create in him, his expression held now not a trace. It was as though these feelings, touching the extreme point of their development, had merged into something greater and higher than themselves, something before the tragedy of which all else faded and disappeared. The chain was drawing tighter and tighter, even to the last link, and the same supreme agony of that inexorable pressure that had laid bare the coarsest and most rebellious depths of the woman's spirit had brought to the man the strength of a great calm.

"Yes," he said in a low, steady tone, "I have come."

"What a fool!" she muttered. "What a fool! What a fool I've been! After all these days, after all these weeks, to lose my head! To fail at the very last! Oh, what a fool!"

The words were not addressed to North. She seemed for the moment almost to have forgotten his presence. And there was something so horrible about the intensity of the self-vituperation, thus oblivious of

everything but itself, that it was little wonder that the man who heard her took two steps forward as he spoke, as though with a blind instinct towards breaking up the situation.

"Do not let us protract this!" he said. "You know what I am here for. You know to what I have a right. Give it me!"

She turned upon him with an inarticulate ejaculation, clutching involuntarily at the back of a chair, her breath coming thick and fast as though it would choke her.

"Your right!" she cried. "Yes, you must have your right at last. Your right! What is it, do you think? A lifelong curse; a lifelong shame! A curse which, if I had my will, should kill you where you stand! A shame which I have held off all these years, only that you may drag it down on me at last. You've been the bane of my existence from the first! I might have known that this would come through you!"

Motionless as a rock North stood confronting her; the muscles of his face had contracted slightly. As though holding to that one rope in the midst of a sea of hideous confusion, he repeated his words:

"Give me what I am here for."

She hardly seemed to hear his words. As though he had not spoken she went on, her voice growing in coarse fury with every syllable.

"If I could go back again!" she cried. She was beating her hand wildly against the bar of the chair. "If I could go back! The guilt would have been yours, not mine. I did my part when I forbade the marriage. On you—you who defied me, who trampled under your feet the claims of gratitude and duty, on you Heaven's vengeance would have fallen, not on me! Why did I interfere? Why did I interfere?"

"It's done!" he said hoarsely. "The truth must follow. Tell it me!"

She faced him for one moment; her eyes glaring, her features working convulsively. Then she broke into a wild laugh.

"Take it, then!" she cried, "if you're so anxious for it. Here it is. The woman you were going to make your wife is the widow of your father!"

"What?"

The cry broke from North Branston, as a man may cry once stabbed through and through. Then there was a silence. Slowly and gropingly, with a face which was rapidly changing from white to grey, he stretched out his hand and felt for a chair. He sat down heavily, leaning forward, one clenched hand pressed down on the table.

"Say that again!" The words came from North Branston thick, hardly audible, and with long intervals between each. He did not lift his head.

As though in launching at him the bolt which had stunned him, her fury, thus relieved, had sunk down, leaving her to a ghastly realisation of the irretrievableness of the situation, the woman on the other side of the table was watching him, with the defiant challenge in her distorted face giving place to a furtive, sullen stare.

Supporting herself by the grip with which she clutched the chair-rail in her hand, Mrs. Vallotson answered hoarsely:

"Sir William Karslake was your father. You were an illegitimate child."

With a sudden desperate ejaculation, as though the point pressed home had quickened where it should have killed, North Branston threw up his head, and brought his clenched fist down on the table. His face was ashen and drawn, but every line of it was instinct with that which was flashing in his eyes—absolute negation and denial.

"It's false!" he cried. "It's false! Sir William Karslake had spent his life in India. It is not possible. How could a man live to my age in ignorance of such a curse upon his life? How——"

The words froze on his lips; the passion of expression turned to stone upon his face. Looking into the eyes of the woman before him, he looked back down the years of his life, and he saw there, rolling up from the farthest limits of his memory, a shapeless shadow which would not be denied; which seemed to take upon itself, even as he looked, the outline of a ghastly form which it had never worn before.

"Sir William Karslake went to India the year after you were born."

The words were uttered in a voice like that of an automaton, and the speaker's dreadful eyes never shifted from his face. With a last wild effort to release himself, with a final instinct to fight down that shadow, to beat it off, to crush it into nothingness at any cost, North Branston sprang to his feet with a hoarse cry.

"It's a lie!" he said. "Prove it! Give me your authority! Tell me how you know!"

The fierce demand, hurled out so desperately, rose and filled the room, and dropped upon a dead silence. A livid shade, not like the hue of life at all, was stealing over Mrs. Vallotson's face. She was leaning heavily forward on the chair by which she

held, her breath coming in great laboured gasps. She tried to speak, but only a faint rattling in her throat made itself audible.

"Can't you understand?"

The words reached his ears thick and indistinct, and, as he heard them, something in her eyes seemed to leap up and burn into his brain. Once more, slowly, and for the last time, the look painted on her face was reflected back upon the face of the man with whom she was confronted. The muscles on North Branston's forehead were standing out tense and strained. His features seemed to freeze gradually into a horror unimaginable, inconceivable. He fell back a pace, and stood there staring at her.

"Say it!"

Hardly audible as the two words were, they carried with them the force of a command. And slowly, as though the words were dragged from her by an agency against which she was powerless, Mrs. Vallotson answered them.

"Sir William Karslake's son is also mine."

The last links of the chain were drawn together. The man and woman bound by it stood face to face in an awful silence—mother and son.

Seconds passed into moments; moments drifted into the black gulf of the past; and not the slightest movement broke the death-like stillness of the room. The man was the first to stir. With one of those commonplace everyday actions which show that tension too highly strained has snapped, that the mind pushed too far has relapsed into dull inaction, North sat down and rested his forehead on his hand as his elbow propped itself upon the table. As though his movement had broken a spell, the dreadful rigidity of Mrs. Vallotson's figure broke up in the same instant. Beating her hands passionately together, she turned upon him where he sat, no colour coming back into her face, her eyes glaring out of it in what seemed to be a very delirium of long pent-up hatred and impotent rebellion.

"Why were you ever born?" she cried, in a hoarse, suppressed tone. "Why were you ever born? I hated you at first. You were the living sign, never to be done away with, of my intolerable folly! I've hated you month by month and year by year. You were the never-to-be-forgotten pledge of what was past and done with! I hate you now ten times and twenty times over. You've brought me to this!"

He lifted his head and looked at her. His face had a stricken look upon it. His voice seemed to come from very far away.

"Not I!" he said. "It is the hand of fate!"

"Fate!" she echoed. "Yes, it was fate that left me with you first, perhaps! I fought fate then, and won. I put my will against the past, and wiped it out. I said that not a trace of it should live, and not a trace of it has lived—except in you!"

She stopped, throwing out one arm as in supreme denunciation, with a gesture of which the tragedy struck with indescribable incongruity against the coarse violence of her appearance. It was the awful incongruity that lay behind; the unspeakable discrepancy between the indomitable power which had overborne all that stood in its path, and the sordid narrowness of the limitations in which it had worked; materialised, and given visible form.

A strand of her grey hair had become loose and fallen about her. She lifted her hand and thrust it roughly back.

"You'll have to know the details, I suppose," she said; and the recklessness of her defiance flashed in her eyes, and rang in every tone of her voice. "Then here they are. Nothing that you've ever heard about the past is true. I made a past, when I turned that page of my life of which you are the only trace, to fit the future that I meant to have. I was a solicitor's daughter in a little country town, and I went away with your father when I was seventeen. I knew what I was doing well enough, but I didn't care. He took me abroad, and he stayed with me constantly until you were born. Then he got tired of me. That was your fault!"

Her voice rose fiercely as she spoke the last words. North Branston neither moved nor spoke. His face, haggard and drawn, was still turned to her, but he hardly seemed to see her. His dull and sunken eyes seemed to be looking beyond, looking at that not visible to any physical vision—the long vista of the terrible past, lighted up now and for ever as with flashes of lurid fire. She paused an instant and then went on.

"I was tired of the life by that time, too!" she said. "I wanted to get back. He behaved very well to me. He had been amusing himself before he settled down in life, and he was willing to pay for his amusement. He made me an allowance, and we separated."

"Why did you not own me?"

"Own you!" she cried passionately. "I wish I had killed you! I hated you, I say! I would not have you call me mother; I would not treat you as my child.



There was a girl in the hotel where he left me with a step-sister who was only a baby. That put it into my head to call you my brother. Then I set to work to cover up all trace of what had been. I never drew the allowance; it would have been a link with the past, and I wanted him to lose sight of me. I came to England and worked. Before six months were over I read in a paper that he was gone to India. He belonged to one of the families whose doings are recorded in the papers, your father! Don't forget that!" She spoke with a wild, irrepressible sneer, passing her hand across her forehead, on which the drops stood thick, as she paused a moment. "Then I knew that I was safe," she went on. "I had no difficulty from the first. No one doubted me—I never gave them a chance. I got what I wanted. I became a married woman, respected and looked up to. I've had the position I intended to have, and no other woman could have filled it better than I have done! For eight-and-twenty years you were the only roughness in my life!"

Her voice—vibrating with a coarse triumph so strangely disproportionate to the achievement of which she spoke; echoing with a spirit which, in the moment of her defeat, lit up the life thus baldly sketched with the strange pathos which hovers round futility and inadequacy—trembled with an intensity of vindictiveness, and she stopped abruptly. But only for a moment. As though with that final statement of the satisfaction of her life there had rushed upon her anew the realisation of what she had lost, a very frenzy of blind, unreasoning rebellion surged up in her, and she broke into a sudden furious torrent of speech.

"Fate!" she said, "you call it fate! It comes through you, from first to last! It comes through you. If you had never lived it never could have happened! If you had never seen this woman it never could have happened! If you——"

"Stop!"

Stumblingly and painfully North Braston had risen to his feet. The monosyllable had burst from him low and broken, but with that ringing in it before which even the rage of the half-maddened woman before him paused instinctively.

"Stop!" he cried again. "If it has come through me, it comes upon me also! If my existence is a curse to you, what else is it to me? We are two puppets in the hands of a power beyond us, bound together to our own destruction!"

## DWELLERS ON THE HEATH.

"As for the people in the cottages on the Heath, it's no manner of use asking them to come out for the day; they've all got their own cows and pigs to tend."

Such was the discouraging answer to my enquiry for a charwoman on arriving in a new country neighbourhood. Eventually, the charwoman was secured elsewhere, and I seized an early opportunity of investigating these cottagers who appeared to enjoy life under such ideal conditions. A further acquaintance with the dwellers on the Heath, has considerably modified my first impression of the accession of comfort necessarily derivable from the possession of a few acres of land by labourers. In the first place there can be no doubt that the squalor and insanitary condition of these tiny farms far exceeds that of ordinary cottages. The pigsties and cowsheds are not unfrequently under the same roof with the dwelling-house, leaning either against the back or one of the side walls, and all draining with absolute impartiality into open gutters and stagnant pools round the door. The perpetual presence of fowls in the kitchen is in itself destructive of any pretence at cleanliness. Yet all the early spring chickens, by which a considerable profit is made, have of necessity to be reared indoors. Most of the winter one or two hens with their young families are to be found clucking about all the kitchens on the Heath, the floors being strewn with grain or messes of sopped bread likely to tempt the appetite of the tender young birds, who, when satisfied, all nestle down under their mother's wing in baskets or on heaps of sacking provided for them. During the summer months, when the house doors stand open from morning till night, the poultry wander in and out with an entire sense of possession, searching under the table and dresser for fallen scraps as unconcernedly as though they were scratching on the rubbish-heap outside. It is amusing to notice how on the arrival of a visitor the mistress of the house deems it due to the conventionalities to make a polite attempt at clearing the kitchen of poultry. After providing one with a chair hospitably near the fire, she summons the children to help her drive them out. Then ensues an indescribable scene of cackling, dust, and flying of feathers. Two or three children pursuing half-a-dozen excitable cockerels under churns and behind mangles, create an

amount of confusion which effectually stops conversation for some time ; and in the end the poultry always come off victorious. Directly the active pursuit ceases they are all back again in the kitchen, and both hostess and visitor are reduced to feigning not to notice their presence as the only chance of a quiet life.

Of course, the possession of pigs necessitates the presence of large sacks of meal and other food for fattening them, which, in order to ensure safety from the rats, have usually to be kept in the living rooms, sadly encumbering the small available space, and giving an air of discomfort which it is difficult to exaggerate. The rats also have a way of following what they appear to regard as their natural perquisites, and even in broad daylight one sometimes sees a dark shadow gliding towards the winter board of food.

The dozen detached cottages on the Heath form a small hamlet on the extreme confines of a country parish. They are completely off the main road, and approachable only by a rough grass lane, which in winter is practically impassable from mud. Mud, indeed, is the keynote of the situation, for the Heath is nothing but a quagmire of clay, traversed by huge ditches full of stagnant water. Until the last few years it was all practically waste land, upon which in by-gone times squatters had run up little irregular buildings, paying a merely nominal rent to the lord of the manor for the land enclosed. The rule in such cases used to be that anybody who could build his dwelling in a night should have undisturbed possession of it ; and old people tell one how in their childhood the neighbours used to join together and help each other to run up in a few hours something that might be called a house. A single room roofed in was sufficient to establish a right, and the house could afterwards be completed and enlarged at its owner's leisure. Under these circumstances the situation and appearance of the Heath cottages are, as might be supposed, varied in the extreme. Very little attempt has been made to secure any convenience of approach. The walls of some of them rise out of the pool of stagnant water that borders the lane all the year round ; quite as many are dotted about in the corners of the rush-grown fields, two or three of which form each little farm. During the winter, neighbours living some quarter of a mile apart frequently see nothing of each other for weeks, the mud dividing them almost as

completely as a channel of water. At first I could not imagine how the dwellers on the Heath could get away from their houses at all during the wet season, much less how they ever contrived to send their children daily to school ; but gradually, in pity for my wanderings in knee-deep mud up the grassy lane, they revealed to me a line of field-paths which were in general use by the inhabitants, and which, in spite of the approach to all the stiles being through water, were certainly a great improvement on the road. Only absolute strangers attempted to use the latter in wet weather.

As may be supposed, such surroundings did not encourage much neatness of appearance amongst the women, and the knowledge that no visitors might be expected from one year's end to another removed all sense of restraint. It was a sort of shock at first to find the proprietress of three or four cows and a pony-cart, clad in a ragged old short skirt of nondescript colour and a scanty shawl that no respectable villager would have worn. But this rough appearance is explained by the fact that the women practically do the work of the place. If the husbands are able-bodied, they wisely elect to supplement the profits of their little farms by regular wages as labourers elsewhere. This means that the wife—aided, perhaps, by the children after school hours—has to attend to the cows, pigs, and poultry ; no light task when there are two or three calves to rear, butter to be churned and taken to market once a week, with whatever poultry may be ready for sale, and a large garden to be worked and kept in order. Some of these farms on the Heath are tenanted by invalid men whose wives do all the work, with what little help their husbands can give when able to crawl from the fireside ; but I do not think if the reverse were the case they could manage. When the woman falls ill they have to sell the cow, and then all is at an end. The bare possibility of the man milking, churning, and making up the butter, never seems to occur to them. Their personal attachment to a good cow is very great. One sick woman who was compelled to part with hers through inability to attend to the butter-making, could not speak of it without tears ; and the man could not bring himself to drive it to market, but had to send a friend. As the reason for giving up farming on a small scale seems almost always to be ill health on the part of the woman, the obvious conclusion

to be drawn is that as long as the wife is exceptionally strong, and willing to work out of doors as hard as any man, in addition to doing the washing and such domestic duties as are strictly indispensable, just so long are these little farms profitable. Indisputably it must be an advantage for the children to obtain fresh milk easily; but in other respects the standard of comfort amongst these little proprietors seems distinctly below that of ordinary cottagers.

It was from a woman on the Heath that I heard the following wonderful cure for jaundice, or yellow-wort as they call it. In answer to my enquiries respecting her son, who had been ailing for some time, she replied that he had at last completely recovered, adding:

"'Twasn't the doctor, though, as did it; they say as doctors ain't no manner of good for that complaint, can't do nothing with it like!"

I expressed my natural curiosity as to how, under these circumstances, the cure had been effected.

"Well, I took him to the doctor, and then I took him along to the woman," she said. "But 'twas the woman cured him."

It is not the first time that I have had occasion to notice this impartial conduct on the part of my neighbours. In cases of illness, for the sake of respectability, as one might say, they have recourse to the regular practitioner, whilst at the same time they give themselves a second chance by reciting a charm, or trying some concoction of herbs recommended by an acquaintance. If they recover, the credit is given as a matter of course to the amateur medical adviser.

It required some pressing to elicit from my hostess a detailed account of the ceremony to which this obstinate case of jaundice had at last yielded. Nowadays cottagers are very reticent about these little irregular cures, speaking of them shyly, and with an evident dread of exciting either ridicule or blame.

"Well, then," she said at last, "this is how it was. The woman broke off a hank of white yarn, and she measured it from her elbow to the tip of her middle finger several times, and she said something, but I couldn't rightly hear the words. Then she measured it again up and down her arm the same way until the yarn was all gone, and then she said some more words and the boy's name.

"The illness is in him the depth of my finger," she told me. But what she meant by that I can't say. And then he was to

go home and get a pennyworth of saffron, and put it in a bottle of brandy, and drink some every day. We don't know what the words were, but we think it was something out of the Bible. They must never tell what words they say, or the power would go."

It appears on investigation that there are two or three of these women still about in the neighbourhood, quite respectable people from all account.

"Yes, one of them cured father years ago when he was mortal bad with the yellow-wort," continued my hostess, at last wound up to giving her experiences on the subject. "He used to breathe on a rough hank of yarn, a nog as we call it, and then send it to the woman at her house. And she'd make a sort of rope from it and send it back to him to wear round his body; he wore it for weeks, and my son he wore one round his leg. When the woman sees any one she can say whether the illness has gone too far for her or not. Each time my son went to see her she'd say how he was, and of course he'd know from his own feelings how he felt, and they always seemed to agree together. But you mustn't pay the woman, or she loses the power. People give her presents after, but it mustn't be money. Why, I've often worn a charm round my neck for the toothache. Bible words, that is, sewn up in a little bag."

At this point I naturally interrupted the narrative to enquire whether the charm had ever cured her.

"Well, there!" she replied, with a smile, "I never could rest without looking at the words, and of course that broke the charm. And you mustn't let it fall neither, or that spoils it. All the words the women use are out of the Bible," she reiterated, feeling that this information must necessarily be of a reassuring nature, and neutralise any bad impression I might have formed of her as one dealing in forbidden arts.

A prominent trait in cottagers is the reckless courage with which they will try any fresh remedy that is suggested in the most casual manner. A girl on the Heath who was constantly being treated for eczema at the hospital attributed a sudden cessation of the complaint—which had proved too obstinate for the doctors—to taking a bottle of mixture decocted from various herbs, which had been recommended to her mother by a woman she saw one market day. In this instance, however, the cure was very temporary. Another woman recently told

me that her health had been greatly benefited by trying a box of pills she was told of by a stranger she met in the train. The men are quite as enterprising. Two in particular I remember, who, having fallen into chronic ill health, used to make a practice of searching down the advertisement sheet of the local newspaper, and trying in turn all the remedies that seemed likely to bear upon their cases.

Perhaps the dwellers on the Heath may be excused for trying any quack medicine or superstitious charm which promises to counteract the disease bred of universal damp. As a matter of fact, these dozen families have for the most part quite as sickly an aspect as the inhabitants of any back street in a manufacturing town. This is not a district of dramatic floods, sweeping all before them; but of monotonous ankle-deep mud for fully eight months of the year.

"Seems to me her face looks all the same colour as the mud!" said an old man to me once, when touching on his neighbour's appearance with more realistic truth than gallantry, seeing that she was of the opposite sex. His definition, however, of the prevailing complexion of the dwellers on the Heath was absolutely correct. Some of their complaints have been medically attributed to the amount of badly cured and half-cooked bacon eaten by the country people, which is said to produce disastrous effects on the digestion.

It may well be imagined with how little favour the dwellers on the Heath regard the modern system of compulsory education. On these tiny farms, where the man of the house if not ailing is usually absent, a strong boy of twelve to do jobs about the place is simply an invaluable assistant to the hard-worked woman. Yet these strong boys with a taste for outdoor work are precisely the ones who have the greatest difficulty in passing the required standard, and consequently have to be kept drudging on at school long after their clever companions, who might obviously profit by a little extra book-learning, are free to earn wages as farm servants. The last year of the backward boy's attendance at school is often embittered by a kind of guerilla warfare between his parents and the school authorities, each struggling for possession of his unfortunate person. Happily, when the occasion arises, even the backward boy can bestir himself and conquer sufficient learning for all practical purposes. Not long since an old woman was telling me how her son, in the days when such a feat was possible,

had managed to attend the village school for years without ever attaining to the art of writing. Grown older, and becoming unsettled, he took it into his head to emigrate to America, and obtained papers and directions on the subject from the rector. The despair of his parents was intense when they discovered his project, not so much at the prospect of parting from him, as at the idea that henceforth all communication between them would be at an end on account of his inability to write, or even to read written characters. They naturally shrank from the idea of having to employ a third person as go-between; their dislike to this apparently inevitable arrangement being intensified by poor people's prevailing dread that strangers will become acquainted with their affairs—a dread not in the least neutralised by the reflection that an inhabitant of New York was not likely to be deeply interested in scraps of family news from an English village. However, the solution of the problem came from the young man himself, who during his last few weeks at home turned his attention to study, sitting about under hedges, as his mother proudly recalls, poring over his books. The parents' dread was averted; letters arrived regularly from America, at first painfully written in a childish, unformed hand, but as the years passed by gaining in length and facility, and bringing with them the news of a prosperous career crowned by the possession of a flourishing American wife, whose photograph, with that of a baby in a most gorgeous transatlantic robe, form treasured ornaments of the old people's cottage.

There is one epoch from which all events on the Heath date, namely, the sale of the land some years ago by the lord of the manor, and its partition amongst several small landlords. There are recollections of fancied injustice in connection with that transfer, which still rankle with a freshness that the lapse of time seems incapable of dimming. These memories may probably be tinged with prejudice, but the fact certainly remains that the Heath is rapidly depopulating since its partition. The first act of those who by saving or borrowing had collected a sufficient sum to purchase two or three cottages, was to raise the rents to such a prohibitive height that their neighbours rebelled, and several of the old inhabitants left the Heath sooner than be imposed upon. The shortsightedness of this policy soon became visible, for the tumbledown old places which had only been kept going by constant patching with a few



boards, or a handful of thatch, became rapidly uninhabitable on being left empty. Many of them are half-ruined, some are converted into cattle-sheds, of others nothing remains but a heap of stones overgrown with long grass and sting-nettles. A few of these ruins date from still earlier times, for several of the first dwellers on the Heath, who had gradually taken up a considerable amount of land round their little dwellings, did not care to retain it when the lord of the manor required some acknowledgement in the shape of rent; but it was undoubtedly the partition of the land which gave the last blow to the prosperity of the settlement.

The grinding discomforts experienced by the tenants under these landlords, drawn from the same class as themselves, is well illustrated by what a woman on the Heath recently told me. She and her husband had newly come to one of these little places, and had stipulated before entering that the pump should be cleaned out, as it was so foul as to be unuseable. This, however, was not done, and the next time the landlord came round to collect his rents the woman reproached him with putting her to the trouble of fetching water from a distant well for butter-making, drinking, and such purposes. After expressing his surprise that she was not satisfied with the sooty water that ran off the roof, which he stated was always considered good enough for these purposes in his own house, he fell into a passion, and with most unnecessarily vehement language wound up by declaring:

"All the trouble comes of you faddy old women running here and there after clean water, listening to all the stuff these doctors and inspectors tell you! Why, scores of times I've lain down and drunk out of the runs in the road and no harm come to me!"

"But for all he said I can't conceit the dirty water, not if it were ever so!" concluded my informant, who, however, did not succeed in getting her pump mended.

In spite of the universal dampness of the Heath the people have to go a long way to get their clean water, and one of their chief troubles in wet weather is that the flooded meadows cut them off from the best well. They think a great deal of this good drinking water, and I have heard of an old woman, years after she had left the place, craving so incessantly on her death-bed for a drink of water out of a well on the Heath that her friends actually satisfied her by sending for some.

The accuracy and intensity with which

cottagers retain impressions is doubtless the result of the monotonous lives they lead, in which the smallest departure from the daily routine is commented on and discussed in all its aspects.

This applies more especially to the elderly people, whose memory for detail is simply marvellous; after the lapse of half a lifetime, they can quote glibly the amount they paid the doctor for attendance during any special illness. But the conditions under which many of them have lived amply explain the extreme vividness with which they recall the past. A farmer's wife, for instance, in this neighbourhood died at the age of eighty-three in the house where she was born, never having slept out of it, except for one night by way of a wedding tour.

One crippled, semi-paralysed old woman who had spent most of her married life on the Heath, was never weary of telling how more than forty years ago she started the complaint from which she has suffered ever since. Her recital never varied in the slightest degree, and however often it was repeated, there was no lack of appropriate gesture and animation as she recalled that fatal day when her cow, breaking its horn in a gate, galloped like a mad thing over the Heath, she running behind it through the mud in a hastily slipped on pair of men's boots that came off and were left behind long before the chase was over. And then her lamentations, and all that was said and done whilst she bandaged up the poor cow's horn, never giving a thought to the wet clothes in which she was standing herself for so many hours, which nevertheless had their revenge in transforming her from an active young woman to a helpless cripple. It vies in clearness with the other dread recollection of her life, namely, how when she was a girl out in service there was much talk of the Chartists and their terrible doings, and how rough bands of men used to come round asking for money, which was always given without a murmur, for no one knew whose haystack or even house would next be burnt. Then came the well-remembered relief when they all assembled by the newly-made railroad to see the soldiers passing in open trucks, like a flash of red, going to put down the Chartists. In her own eyes probably the act of greatest daring she ever accomplished was once going a short railway journey, an experience she looked forward to with great excitement, but which she found so alarming that she never repeated it. Of late years, indeed,

she has become entirely bedridden, her limbs being sadly contorted with rheumatism, a fact which gives her considerable anxiety respecting the orderly performance of her funeral rites. "There! I often think they'll find it mortal hard to lay me out as they should," she says, with that curious openness on the subject of her own decease that is quite embarrassing. In certain classes of society the contemplation of the preparations for their own obsequies seems quite a pleasant source of interest to invalids. I was once commending a woman for the kindly way in which I had seen her hurrying out at night across the fields to succour an old neighbour who was dying. "Well, it was this way," she explained. "Poor John had made me promise times and times that I'd lay him out and no one else. So when I heard he was took for death, I just started off as I was. Yes, he wasn't quite gone when I got there, so he'd see I hadn't forgotten." It must, she evidently felt, have been a practical consolation to his last moments to see that she was on the spot ready to take charge of his remains.

Illness seems to accentuate more forcibly than anything the characteristically different ideals of comfort that are entertained by various classes. An acquaintance on the Heath last winter elected to struggle through a long and very serious illness lying on six chairs in front of the kitchen fire. There was some doubt about whether the fire in the bedroom would burn properly, and some difficulty about moving the bed downstairs; whilst the chairs, with their legs roped together so as not to slip apart, and covered with a mattress, made, it appears, a sufficiently comfortable bed, at least the patient infinitely preferred it to the isolation of a bedroom.

One infirm old man on the Heath used to take to his bed for days together during the winter, when the field in which his cottage stood was completely flooded. As soon as the water rose high enough to put out his kitchen fire, he would retire upstairs with what food he had in the house, and lie in bed to keep himself warm. When the floods have lasted unusually long, a kindly neighbour has been known to wade through the water to enquire whether the lonely old man was all right, and bring him a rare luxury in the shape of a cup of tea, handed in through the bedroom window, the key of the door being probably upstairs in his pocket.

The fate of old people in the country is

often unavoidably rather dreary. Even when they are in the main kindly treated, they endure a great deal of inevitable neglect owing to the isolation of the dwellings. One person I knew was accustomed to lock her bedridden old father into the empty house and carry off the key, when she went once a week to market: feeling that she was thus guarding against the only possible danger, namely, of tramps breaking in during her absence. Yet this extreme loneliness happily does not seem to strike those who are used to it. An old widow on the Heath lived absolutely by herself in a cottage which was condemned as unfit for human habitation, but which she contrived to retain as a home in preference to joining other members of her family in more inhabited spots. Quite crippled with rheumatism and almost blind, she yet clung with passionate love to the old place where she was always sure of being undisturbed and free from observation. It was in vain that her son, a well-to-do man, living in one of a respectable row of brick houses in a large village, begged her to give up the old hovel and make her home with him and his family. After a short visit she always returned to her chosen abode, literally worried away by the unaccustomed noise and fuss of so many neighbours. Probably, also, she was keenly aware of the advantages of having one's own home, be it ever so poor. As another old person once said to me, under somewhat similar circumstances: "My niece and her husband want me to go and live along with them, but what I think on is my own fireside. If I went there, and after all they should look dark on me, 'twould be sudden death." But my old friend on the Heath was spared the pain of ever receiving grudging hospitality. How she contrived to support herself at the last was a perfect mystery, even to her neighbours. They were all kind to her, for she was about the only really poor person amongst them; and they spoke of her with a certain respect, knowing that much of her life she had toiled unceasingly, mostly at hard field work for the farmers, and so contrived to keep a husband many years older than herself out of the workhouse until his death at over ninety. When it is taken into consideration that for the last fifteen years of his life he can have been nothing but an expense, this was really a remarkable feat.

She was devoted to the old man, though towards the last he became quite childish and could not stir from the chimney corner. "But a husband's a husband," she would

say, "and when he's gone and you've got naught but the four walls to look at, you know the difference." Lovingly she used to recall his childish fondness for sweets, and how the clergyman would make him happy by little treats of dried raisins; dwelling affectionately on the old man's simple cunning in finding these dainties when she was out, however safely they were put away. She was alone in the cottage with the old man when he died; the neighbours were kind, but the houses on the Heath are far apart, and the little farms do not admit of much absence from home. Some ten years later she lay ill in the same room, the only bedroom of the cottage. Her distress was very great, for a passer-by having discovered her condition, the doctor had been summoned, and had given the order for her immediate removal to her son's house. Indeed it did not appear that recovery was possible lying in this mere shed, the thatch and the floor being equally decayed, so that one could literally see the clouds above and the kitchen beneath, as one sat by her bedside. The precipitous wooden steps came up in the middle of the bedroom, about the only place where one could stand upright, and as they were not shut off by any door, the draught from below may be imagined. But a little draught more or less hardly seemed to matter in a dwelling so dilapidated that its occupant constantly used to hobble out and spend the night in the garden when there was much wind blowing, for fear the whole place should collapse and crush her. However, no wet actually fell upon the bed, according to the old woman, who regarded her threatened removal in the light of an act of tyranny, for since she had partially lined the rotten thatch with scraps of floorcloth begged from a shop, she considered the room rendered quite habitable. The neighbours regarded the old place with such horror that they were afraid to stay alone in it with the sick woman after dark, and the difficulty of getting any one to look after her led at last to her giving an unwilling consent to the move. A terrified grand-daughter was sent for, to stay with her for the day or two whilst the necessary arrangements were being made, and in the darkness of the night the neighbours were roused by the girl's cries as she ran shrieking across the fields, having awoke to find her grandmother lying dead by her side. Seeing that the old woman's sole wish had been to end her days on the Heath, there did not seem much cause for lament as far as she was concerned.

This was evidently the opinion of a relative who appeared on the scene in the course of the day, and who reserved all pity for her own hard case.

"There's some folks get all the trouble and expense!" she said complainingly. "That's three corpses we've had to do for in three years!"

When there is not much affection involved, cottagers are apt to be terribly outspoken. But as it happened, the old widow's funeral was conducted on a scale quite out of proportion to the attention she had excited during her lifetime. The religious sect to which she belonged came forward and buried her in great style, to the wondering admiration of the neighbours.

"It must have been quite a show for them the other end of the Heath, what with a mourning coach coming up the lane and all!" enviously remarked an old dame, who was precluded by the distance and her infirmities from witnessing any part of the ceremony.

The element of discord on the Heath was an old woman who had been born there, and who, after disappearing for many years, and carrying on mysterious occupations in foreign parts, had returned with sufficient money to buy herself a house with a few surrounding acres of land. Why out of the whole world she selected the Heath as a place of residence it is difficult to divine, for the land was miserably poor, and she was not on speaking terms with any of her neighbours. A lifelong feud reigned between her and a brother, who occupied another of the little holdings, and it was sad to see these two lonely old people, each leading a life of solitary discomfort, within half a mile of one another. The old woman, who was of gigantic stature, and indescribably repulsive appearance, was a source of much terrified speculation to her neighbours. When she talked at all of her past life, she threw out such vaguely alarming hints that it was currently reported that she had been something of a slave-driver on a sugar plantation! Her appearance, language, and dress would certainly have justified any supposition; and her habits, though not necessarily criminal, were so peculiar as to excite suspicion. With bated breath it was reported that she had no bed in the house, but slept in a hammock she had brought off a ship; and that the one table had been made at home out of rough pieces of cord-wood. At the same time she had a passion for increasing the stock she kept on her little farm, until the poor creatures became

mere skin and bone for want of food. Much of her warfare with the other inhabitants rose from her choosing to regard the grass lane that crossed the Heath as her own exclusive property, solely to be grazed by her cows. The most animated fights took place over this piece of common land, resulting in black eyes and summonses. The real offender, however, got off far more lightly than she deserved, as the magistrates were disarmed by the portrait she drew of herself as a poor lone woman, working hard for her living. This statement was indeed literally true, as sooner than abandon her claim to the lane she would take her cows out there after dark, and wait about whilst they grazed, preferring the chance of a little extra gain to resting after a hard day's work. To increase the existing terror of her she tried to persuade people that she had the power of what she called "putting bad wishes upon them"; but happily the neighbours had the sense to see that this was manifestly untrue, or they would none of them have been alive.

Keeping cows gives the people on the Heath unusual facilities for making a little money by taking stray children to nurse. The pay for doing this is about three shillings a week, but there is always considerable risk in these cases of the money gradually decreasing, and at last stopping altogether. Of course the remedy is obvious, to return the child to its parents, or if they cannot be found, as is sometimes the case, then send it to the workhouse. It is pleasant to observe that the foster parents often become so fond of their charge that they are unwilling to adopt either of these courses. An old couple on the Heath have in this way brought up a boy practically as their own son, without receiving any payment from his parents for years. The mother put him out when a baby, as she had been deserted by her husband, and was forced to go out to service. When the child was two or three years old she came to visit him, and appeared much vexed at finding that he had forgotten her completely. The old woman excused him as best she could, at the same time thinking this display of anger towards a mere baby very unreasonable. Presently the mother went on to explain that as she could not afford to pay any longer for the boy, she had come to take him away. The old woman was loth to part with him, having, it seems, an indefinable suspicion that all was not right; moreover, the child clung to her as being the person who had brought it up. However, there seemed no help for it;

the foster mother handed over her charge and went indoors. In another moment she was out again, attracted by the boy's cries of distress, and found the mother beating him in the lane for not following her more willingly.

"Then it came over me all of a sudden," says the old woman, "that she was only taking him off to make away with him!"

She seized the child, and bringing him indoors, absolutely declined to part with him in spite of the mother's wild words and threats. Whether the old woman's fears were justified it is impossible to say, but as the poor mother shortly afterwards died a raving lunatic, it is not improbable that the boy's life was saved by the devotion of his foster parents.

When talking to an old couple in one of the cottages on the Heath, I once met a married daughter, home on a visit, whose experiences of life were most amusingly different from those of her parents. Her husband had an excellent post as valet to a foreign Ambassador, resident in London, where he was so constantly in the habit of seeing Royal personages, that it appears he was no longer in awe of them, or even particularly interested in their doings.

"Why, there," stated his wife, "Brown always says Kings and Queens are only like any other ladies and gentlemen when you get used to them!"

Of the glories of the Embassy she gave me a passing glimpse by observing that "all the gentlemen there are barons or Princes — mostly Princes!" And what brought home the contrast most of all was when she produced a bit of genuine wedding cake from the last Royal wedding for the old people on the Heath to taste. I hardly think they were so much impressed by this astounding familiarity with great people as I was. London itself appears such a legendary place when regarded from a country cottage, that once there the society of a few Kings and Queens is rather what one might expect! One thing is certain: that in spite of the loneliness, the constant toil, and the still more constant damp, there are probably none of the dwellers on the Heath who would change their muddy lane and tumble-down cottages for a comfortable town house, approachable by a good stone pavement.

### THE FEVER TREE.

THE odour of Eucalyptus oil is now as familiar throughout the land as household



words. As a febrifuge, and as an alleviator of, if not a cure for, that commonest and most troublesome of all the ills that flesh is heir to—a cold in the head—many people have come to esteem the pungent fumes. Long as the hygienic qualities of the plant have been known in other climes, the popularity of the Eucalyptus here is of comparatively recent growth. It has, however, been of very rapid development, and as everybody now knows the oil, and has had some experience of its virtues, we have thought that our readers may be interested in learning something about the plant from which the oil is derived.

The Eucalyptus best known is the "blue-gum"—*Eucalyptus globulus*—of Australia. As a tree it is remarkable for its resistance to drought and for its rapid growth, for which reasons it has been found invaluable in arid Australia, in relieving the dreariness of otherwise treeless landscapes. Its timber has been called "soft and spongy" by some American arboriculturists, and though good enough for firewood, not good enough for tools; but other people think that the virtues of Eucalyptus timber have not yet been properly appreciated. The jarrah, for instance, which abounds in Western Australia, and which is now coming largely into use in this country for wood-paving and other purposes in which a very hard, close-grained wood is needed, belongs to the Eucalyptus tribe. And no known "borer" of the insect world has ever yet succeeded in riddling a jarrah block or pile.

It is said that the Eucalyptus was first discovered by a French botanist in Tasmania—then Van Diemen's Land—in 1788. Whether he brought it to Europe or not we are not aware, but early in the present century the Eucalyptus was being cultivated in the gardens of Malmaison—only, however, as a botanical curiosity.

In Australia the blue-gum grows to an immense size—even up to four hundred feet—but as the leaves grow vertically they do not afford much shade. These leaves are tough, almost leathery, in texture, and are covered with transparent spots. The flower is yellow, and is enclosed before budding in a very curious envelope, which is the distinctive mark of this species. It exhales a strong balsamic odour. In Europe, the tree attains a height of about one hundred and fifty feet, and seems to flourish best on sandy soil, or near the sea.

There is another species of resinous Eucalyptus, the fruit of which is in Australia used as a spice. It has flexible, drooping

branches, something like the weeping-willow, and it has a thick bark which is extensively used for roofing cabins. The trunk yields a red sap, rich in gum and sugar, and from its leaves is distilled a valuable essential oil. This is the *Eucalyptus poivré*, and there is also another variety which does not grow to a great height; whose branches are large and spreading; and whose roots, lying for the most part above ground, yield a clear white fluid. This is the Tasmanian Cider-tree.

In Europe it has been found that the Eucalyptus thrives best in latitudes south of the forty-fourth parallel, while it flourishes remarkably well in North Africa.

The reason of this is that as a tropical plant the Eucalyptus cannot stand the rigours of an ordinary European winter. In the South of France a great many varieties have been tried, but only a few have been found capable of resisting the low winter temperature. Experience goes to show that successful cultivation cannot be expected where the winter maximum of cold exceeds 21·2 degrees to 17·6 degrees Fahrenheit. About Marseilles the Eucalyptus globulus is now tolerably abundant, and at Hyères the greatest success has been obtained in acclimatising other varieties. It is doubtful, however, if it is cold alone that has prevented the acclimatisation of other species, for it is certain that some kinds do not flourish on European soil under any circumstances.

The author of "The Chemistry of Common Life" says: "The genus Eucalyptus, or gum-tree of the colonists, forms a distinguishing feature in the landscape and forest scenery of Australia and Van Diemen's Land. At certain seasons of the year, a sweet substance exudes from the leaves of those trees and dries in the sun. When the wind blows so as to shake the trees, this Australian manna is sometimes seen to fall like a shower of snow. Like the true manna, this sweet substance contains a peculiar crystallisable sugar, melital."

Something like one hundred and fifty varieties of the Eucalyptus have been found in its native home, but very many of the distinctions are such as botanists only notice. Besides the "globulus" one of the best known and most useful varieties is the "Eucalyptus resinifera," the juice of which is known as Botany Bay Kino, and is, like Indian Kino, largely used in medicine as an astringent. Taken altogether the family have very remarkable qualities, and have a distinct reputation of their own

among trees—for their juices, their timber, their rapid powers of growth, and their faculty for absorbing the water of wet and swampy ground, whereby it is made fit for cultivation.

It is the rapid growth and the reputed property of eliminating malarial conditions where it is planted that have directed the attention of Europeans to it, and have led to extensive planting in France, Algeria, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Corsica, as well as about the European colonies in West and South Africa. But while these experiments have been made for one purpose, other uses have been found. Thus from some six or seven varieties a material is obtained for the manufacture of packing-paper; one variety has a bark which is now largely used in the manufacture of blotting-paper; and several yield not only the essential oil of the drug stores, but also essences much esteemed by perfumers. The bark is being extensively used in tanning, the fibres in cordage and mat-making, and the timber is coming into favour for carriages and furniture. We have even heard that in Australia the oil is being used as an illuminant because of its brilliant and inodorous flame. Clearly the Eucalyptus is a most valuable tree—especially as it will, even in Europe, attain a height of thirty feet or so in three or four years.

But now as to the antiseptic qualities of the tree itself, as apart from the essential oils distilled from it. As to this there is considerable difference of opinion. We have been told that in the South of France the people eagerly gather up the branches at pruning time to hang up in their bedrooms to keep off fevers; and on the other hand we have seen positive statements by Italian scientists that the reputed virtue of the Eucalyptus grove is all a myth.

As it is in Italy that the most extensive experiments have been made in the hygienic qualities of the tree, we will turn for a moment to that country. The reputed power of the Eucalyptus to dry moist soil, and its property of distributing a balsamic atmosphere, led to the planting of many thousands of trees on malarial land in Italy, both by private individuals and by public corporations. According to some accounts, a certain measure of success seems to have attended some of the experiments, though we are afraid that exaggerated expectations of beneficial results have been entertained.

The Adriatic Railway Company began some fifteen years ago to plant about ten

thousand Eucalypti at its stations and along the line, and it is said that the experiment has proved "perfectly satisfactory."

The railway station at Ventimiglia is in a malarial district, and some seven or eight hundred trees were planted round it and along the banks of the Roia. Within a few years, it is said, the malarial fever disappeared, and the result is attributed to the perfume exhaled by the trees.

Again, in the Campagna Romana, where malaria is notoriously prevalent, the Trappist monks planted a large number of the blue-gum variety, and within seven years found the climate so much improved that they were able to take up permanent residence at the monastery. It was upon this that the Government instituted an official enquiry, which resulted in further extensive experiments elsewhere, until now there are upwards of one hundred thousand Eucalypti flourishing in Italy. But for all that, malaria is still prevalent: though, it is said, in a less degree than formerly.

And here it may be pertinent to enquire—what is malaria? According to Professor Crudeli, a distinguished Italian scientist, who made an exhaustive investigation into the disease, and who published a book on the subject a few years ago, malaria is produced, not in water, but in the soil. We must get rid, he says, of the traditional belief that it is produced by the putrefaction of dead vegetable and animal organisms in stagnant water, or in marshes. In Italy the word malaria seems to be applied to all intermittent fevers, but Italy is peculiarly subject to one particular kind of fever that Crudeli ascribes to malarial ferment in the soil. Water is only a factor in producing malaria by freeing the germs, but water may be a preventive if it thoroughly covers, instead of only moistening, the malarial soil.

It is all due to those wretched microbes who seem to cause all diseases nowadays, and the "*bacillus malarie*," according to Professor Crudeli, may flourish in any soil—alluvial, volcanic, or sandy. It dwells, as we are to understand, in nearly all soils, but a minimum temperature of 68 degrees Fahrenheit, a certain amount of moisture, and the action of the atmosphere on the soil, are necessary to its development. It may be prevented from spreading by interrupting the communication of the soil with the atmosphere, either by covering the ground with water or by grasses. It may also be prevented by withdrawing the moisture from the soil by drainage.

Such is the Crudeli theory; and Crudeli says he found in dry as well as in marshy soils the malarial germ, the living parasite which "attacks the red globules of the blood and destroys them, after having produced in them a series of characteristic alterations which indicate with certainty the existence of malarial conditions."

This theory is disputed, of course, as all theories are, but, supposing it to be sound, then the idea of counteracting malaria by means of Eucalyptus trees is vain. They may dry up marshy lands, but they will not destroy the miasmatic emanations. Still we do not find that Crudeli altogether scouts the value of the Eucalyptus—he only offers a warning against the blinding of judgement by exaggerations. His theory certainly finds support in Professor Liversidge, of Sydney, who has stated that in Australia there are forests of Eucalypti in which malaria reigns supreme.

Let us return to the Roman Campagna, where the planting was begun by the monks in 1870, or thereabouts. In seven years, that is about 1877, they returned to the monastery and the plantations were extended. In 1880 the Government established a convict colony on the lands near the monastery which were supposed to have been hygienised by the plantations. Nearly the whole of these convicts went down with malaria, though the peasants of the Campagna outside of the area of planting escaped from it. This was in 1880, and in 1882 there was a renewal of the plague, but this time the Trappists and the convicts only suffered slightly, while the guards were severely smitten and had to be removed. Then Professor Crudeli stepped in and induced the Government to order the suspension of all work during the malarial season, because it was then that the disturbance of the soil set free the germs. But curiously enough, it was not those who worked with the soil who suffered most, but those who stood about and did nothing.

The physician in charge of the convict colony in the Campagna, Dr. Montechiare, has recently declared to the United States Consul-General at Rome—who was requested by the authorities at Washington to enquire into the matter, in connection with a project for planting Eucalypti in America—that his experience justifies him in saying that "no beneficial result against malaria has been derived from the planting of the Eucalyptus." He says that the monks planted fifty thousand trees on a few acres, and that had the efficacy of the

tree been real, the entire settlement of Tre Fontane would have become a wholesome balsamic Eden. This, he says, has by no means been the case, and he thinks that the efficacy of the Eucalyptus in improving the air is no greater than that of the elm, the pine, or the mulberry. Its only merit, according to him, is that it grows rapidly.

This is certainly disappointing, though not conclusive, for doctors differ, as usual, and we find from other reports that malaria has diminished in other parts of Italy where the Eucalyptus has been planted, though it has not been entirely exterminated.

As bearing on the relation of forests generally to malaria, we may quote Consul-General Jones, of Rome, in his report to Washington: "One of the most generally accepted theories is that forests produce malaria independently of the quality of the soil which they cover. On every hand we meet with forests in which the production of malaria is most abundant, and we find on every hand vast tracts of country which remained uninhabited by reason of malaria so long as they were wooded, and that became more or less completely healthful upon being cleared. These facts are interpreted as showing that malaria is produced in the forests by the putrefaction of the leaves, branches, and dead insects that become accumulated on the ground, and there slowly decompose. But such an explanation cannot stand, because, were such the case, we ought to meet with malaria in every forest of the world where decomposition of organic detritus occurs, whereas, on the contrary, many forests are free from malaria. Forests are factors in an indirect way only; they do not produce it themselves, but favour its developement whenever they cover lands that are malarial. They intercept the solar rays, and hence prevent an active evaporation from the soil, so that it retains a great deal of humidity in the warm season. If the soil does not contain the malarial ferment, the forest is not infected, and vice versa. Malarial forests are frequently met with in nature, and the clearing away of these forests has rendered the localities occupied by them much more healthful, if not entirely so."

The Eucalyptus has also been extensively planted in Spain, and there also the globulus, or blue-gum variety, has flourished best; but our only information is, somewhat vaguely, that it has given "most satisfactory results," and that a Spanish authority has

called it "El mejor de los arboles"—the Best of Trees.

The blue-gum was introduced into Southern India so long ago as 1843. It has flourished best on the Nilghiris, where there are now upwards of one thousand five hundred acres of plantations of it. The results are considered so satisfactory from some points of view, that other species are now being planted. Experiments in other parts of India have only been moderately successful, and in the Punjab they have failed, owing to dry seasons, sunburn, and the white ants, which eat away the roots. Only a few hundred trees survive in that province out of several hundred thousand planted. But we learn that in India the Eucalyptus is not esteemed as having value in relieving malarial districts. It is valued as useful in absorbing underground moisture, which it does so effectually that not only small swamps but even springs and streams have been dried up by the planting of Eucalypti near them.

While, however, the value of the Eucalyptus as a fever-dispelling tree is disputed, as we have seen, it is in any case a very remarkable and useful plant. And we need not lose faith in Eucalyptus-oil because the growing wood has not exterminated malaria, any more than we should reject Castor-oil because the Castor-plant is not in itself a remedial agent in its native haunts.

### THE PLEASURES OF GRIEF.

You would scarcely think there were any such pleasures; yet assuredly there are. They are not, of course, of the ecstatic order of human joys. The sad man does not go capering to his friends with happy smiles, inviting them to share his raptures. He does not tell volubly of his distress and cry openly: "Is it not delightful? Have I not cause for laughter and self-congratulation? Come you and rejoice with me."

Not a bit of it. But there are secret joys as well as manifest ones, and in a surprising number of instances we mortals hug our little woes and gloat over them as if they were blessings. They minister to self-esteem quite as often as they humiliate us.

The other day I was in the cemetery of my native town, and observed two women who stood by the edge of a deep clayey hole, designed for a dozen or more of the poor.

The women were in decent black, and tears streamed from their eyes. They

seemed totally indifferent to the three or four bystanders who stared first into the grave's grim profundities, and then at the chattering mourners by its mouth.

"It's hard believing as he's gone—the good steady man as he was—and me now just a widow, with myself to look to for everything," sobbed the one woman.

"It is, poor dear," said the other, "and you with six little children to provide for!"

"One a cripple, and little Janey no better nor a corpse herself!"

"And all the money that's owing for the doctor, and the burying, and——"

"And he never to have thought of being in no club, Betsy, that's the worst of all, when he might have done it so easy any time the last year."

"Well, well, my love, it's no use thinking of it," urged the other.

"But," wailed the widow, "it does me good to do it, and I'm sure if he's alive to see us, it'll do him good too."

After this I strolled elsewhere. It did her good! Precisely. The dispensation seems a strange one, but there's no denying that it might operate in a worse way.

While I was retracing my steps I clashed with a family party carrying three or four wreaths, and all in the most garrulous and gay of moods. I knew the eldest of the women by sight. She, too, had lost her husband recently. But she seemed as expectant and eager in this visit to his grave as if she were going to the theatre to see a lively play. The children laughed loud. There is not the smallest question that the entire family had looked forward to this mourning visit for the past day or two. At the grave they would shed a few tears, murmur a few tender words—all congenial to their emotions—and afterwards go home refreshed.

To turn to a less dismal subject. In my younger days I was cursed by two or three years' experience of school under a Rhadamanthine pedagogue. The monster had well-developed muscles, and he dearly loved his birch. As for us youngsters, we had no false modesty about us, nor were we troubled by a sense of weakness when we shed tears after our frequent castigations.

The method of things was this. The boy or boys destined for the day's birching, which took place in the hour's interval between morning school and dinner, stayed in the big schoolroom. They watched the pedagogue slowly settle his books, go to the cupboard where the birches were kept, and push the flogging stool towards them



with his dapper foot. All the while they wept like Niobe.

Afterwards they were turned loose into the playground, where their appetite for play was small. But—I write from personal knowledge—though they cared, for the moment, nothing at all about bats and balls, they fondly enjoyed being interrogated in detail about their sufferings. "Did he hit hard? Was he more passionate than common? Was he brutal enough to try those curling cuts which made a fellow sting so horribly?" and so forth.

I declare, on the honour of my memory, there was a certain very real element of rapture in the recounting of these particulars. We wept, even when the thrashing was over; but they were then tears of pride and pleasure.

It is the same in calamities of a much larger kind.

I know a man who, some little while ago, dropped, in one fell swoop, from affluence to poverty. It was his own fault. He played the extremely arrant fool as a speculator: put all his eggs into one basket, which tip-tilted.

On the evening of the day that beggared him, this gentleman came into the club as usual. His face was flushed and his eyes sparkling; otherwise there was nothing exceptional about his appearance.

"Well, old man," asked some one, "how have you got on?"

"Got on!" he exclaimed, with a tinkling laugh. "I'm clean raked out. Ruin doesn't spell my condition, and that's a fact!"

His information was not of the kind to lift him in the esteem of a roomful of worldlings. Yet he persisted in not seeing this, and went on to tell of the stages of his idiocy which had led, with mathematical precision, to the final disaster.

And when he had done he lit a cigar, pushed his hat to the back of his head, and swaggered off to the home he had wrecked.

This same foolish person seems content now to live on the reputation he acquired in this one expensive enterprise. He will buttonhole any stranger on the least provocation and relate the tale of his "misfortunes," as he calls them.

He seems destined to revel for life in a recollection that ought to harrow him as it harrows his wife, and will, perhaps, harrow his children when they attain an age suitable for such sensations.

I suppose most people have met one or more members of that large class of ladies who remain unwedded all their days be-

cause of an early disappointment in love. It is not worth while considering if this is the genuine cause of their celibate condition. Perhaps they never had but the one offer. Be that as it may; let it suffice that they fondle this particular reverse of expectation as if it were an actual piece of good fortune.

"I might have had him, my dear," one of these good ladies once said to me over our afternoon tea—I was younger then than now, and she was well on in the sixties—"but there were obstacles in the way; he married Miss B., for her money, of course, and lived only a few years after it. One does not often see such fine men nowadays."

It amused me in a quiet way to see the dear old soul lean back in her arm-chair—winged, to keep off draughts—and caress her hands as she brooded over the past. If she was not enjoying her grief in the thought of it, I am very much mistaken. Her "Well, well, all is done for the best," which came from her suddenly after a while, only confirmed me in my convictions. It will divert the reader, I hope, to hear that her next words were a request that I would touch the bell, which meant that her trusted domestic was to bring two half-pint bottles of champagne from her small cellar. She and I drank the fluid quite happily, and I verily believe she thought of her long-dead lover with something of the poet's art of idealisation while she toyed with her glass. With her, as with many like her, it was clearly

Better to have loved and lost  
Than never to have loved at all.

That is the secret of much of the pleasurable sensation that attends a retrospective view of past calamity. We learn in time that, though perhaps we suffered acutely then, we might have been treated far more severely by the Fates. After all, it is more congenial to our consciousness to realise that we were deemed worthy of a little adverse notice on the part of Dame Fortune, than to perceive that we have been treated by her with calm, contemptuous indifference. The man whose career is made up of a succession of rebuffs and defeats has at least accumulated an interesting amount of experience. He, if any one, may be listened to with advantage on the subject of human nature.

But of all men perhaps the man of imagination can least dispense with the ingredient of sorrow in his cup of life. To be sure, he suffers extremely when actually engaged in quaffing the draught. Yet it may almost be said that the subsequent reaction

is as exhilarating to him as his previous experience was depressing. He mounts high on his earlier griefs; uses them as a pedestal whence to grasp at what he conceives to be the finer fruits of life. If he is a true artist he distils exquisite contrasted relishes from them. Even as the landsman safe on shore is supposed to appreciate his security the better when he sees a doomed ship struggling with the waves, so our poetic friend, when in port from the troubles of his youth, cuddles himself rapturously as he casts his eye over the disappointments of his more or less turbulent past.

As Keats reminds us :

... in the very temple of delight,  
Veiled melancholy has her sovran shrine.

The man who is not entitled to kneel in "veiled melancholy's" shrine when he wills, has not plumbed life's pleasures. To be sure, he may be advised not to do this sweet homage too often. Once in a way, however, it is like opium to a jaded fancy.

Where would our professional pessimists and their vocation be if it were not at least a solace to them to tell over their and poor old humanity's woes on their dismal fingers? I warrant I do not wrong them when I say that they thoroughly enjoy their pastime—or vocation, if you like to dignify it with the name.

"This thing I hoped," says one of them, as he broods with bent brows, "and this other unlooked-for and most undesirable event happened. Was I not ill-used? Is there any mortal who can claim to be more harshly treated? And yet I live on, steeled courageously against the shocks of this unnatural mother of ours, who gives us life only to torment us! The illnesses I have suffered, the women I have loved—all to no purpose, the speculations I have made—mischievously, the bright goals I have striven for and missed! I flatter myself, as I have said, that I am 'facile princeps' among the myriad of other unfortunates in a bad world."

It will be odd if, while he thus bemoans himself, our friend does not smile sweetly. He is favoured, indeed, to have such excellent pretexts for black thought. And perchance at length he rises, stimulated by his very debauch of misery.

Milton's blindness was in no sense a blessing to him, viewed merely as a deprivation. But it opened manifold hitherto sealed chambers of his majestic imagination. Moreover, he were not the poet he was if he did not, like lesser men, find a measure of consolation in a metrical narrative of his losses.

Thus with the year  
Seasons return, but not to me returns  
Day, or the sweet approach of ev'n or morn,  
Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,  
Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine.

But it is not only in its personal appreciation that grief has to be recognised as something remote from the curse it seems. The greater part of literature is built on the catastrophes of human beings, either in the mass or as individuals. Our circulating libraries would lose their custom if the tragic and the sorrowful were eliminated from the books they disperse among us. There is not a novel to be discovered the plot of which does not pivot on disaster, impending or accomplished.

"Sweet are the uses of adversity," and, it may be added, indispensable also to the maker of fiction. The simple reader does not care to look into himself, and ask why he is so absorbed in the series of calamities and escapes which make up the book he has bought. But he will tell you flatly that he would not give one pin—much less four-and-sixpence—for a book in which all the characters are serene and virtuous, and shielded from affliction in any form from the first page to the last. The more trials they have to undergo the better.

I have, at a moving play, sat next to a young lady whose pocket-handkerchief was at work vigorously throughout half an act. At the dropping of the curtain she would scarcely smile for a minute or two. But when speech returned to her, what do you think were her first words? Simply these: "I am so enjoying it all." And yet she was a tender-hearted, sympathetic girl, who would have fainted with horror in the presence of a newly-stuck pig.

These things are a mystery to the person who has not brought himself reverently to perceive that human nature is not to be understood as one learns the rule for the multiplication of decimals. There is, we are told—and we may guess at the truth of it—even downright gratification in the memory of sin which ought rather to evoke lamentations. It is, I suppose, stranger still that a man can smile to-day at what a year or two ago seemed to tear his vitals.

## RICHENDA.

By MARGARET MOULE.

Author of "*The Thirtieth Brydain*," "*Catherine Maidment's Burden*," "*Benefit of Clergy*," "*The Vicar's Aunt*," etc. etc.

### CHAPTER VII.

"AN awfully pretty girl!"  
"Yes, no end pretty!"

"I say, Lucia, just look at that girl over there by herself. She is good-looking, if you like! What lovely hair!"

The comments came from two groups of people who were passing through the entrance hall of the New Gallery on a hot afternoon in the end of June. The girl to whom the words referred was sitting alone on the centre ottoman, studying a catalogue which she had just bought, and evidently waiting for some one. It was Richenda Leicester. She was dressed, not in her nurse's dress, but in a pretty, simple grey frock and hat, such as any girl might wear; and the delicate sombre colour enhanced every tint in her hair and every outline of her face.

It was her first "afternoon out" since she had been in Mrs. Fitzgerald's service, and she had arranged weeks ago to spend it in the New Gallery with a girl who had been a fellow pupil with her at the Training Institution. She was waiting now for the girl to appear.

There was a look of pleasant anticipation on her face; her beautiful eyes shone with a certain happy excitement. All the troubles and difficulties that had weighed so heavily upon her on that cold evening when she had sat looking out of the nursery window; those troubles and difficulties that had rather increased than diminished during the three weeks that had followed; had been left behind for the time in Mrs. Fitzgerald's house. It was the Richenda Leicester of her girlhood at home, a little older for the experience she had gained since then, but still light-hearted and happy, who sat waiting alone this afternoon.

She turned the pages of her catalogue slowly. Richenda knew nothing about pictures; her first acquaintance with any picture-gallery had been made the year before, under the auspices of the same girl for whom she was waiting now. But she had been interested in the pictures she saw then, and she was anxious to find the names of some of the same artists. So she studied it carefully from one end to the other. She shut it suddenly as she reached the end; a consciousness came over her all at once that she had been waiting for a long time. She took out her little old worn silver watch and looked at it. It was half-past three. Bessie Langton had promised to be waiting for her there at three.

Richenda began to look about her with some surprise. She scanned the little moving groups curiously in hopes of seeing

among them the tall figure and good-natured dark face for which she was looking. But they were nowhere visible. Richenda began to wonder whether her friend had missed her somehow.

Perhaps Bessie had passed her, and gone round into the rooms to look for her, she thought. And she took up her catalogue and the same little worn sunshade she had carried on the top of the omnibus the day she was engaged by Mrs. Fitzgerald, and set out to make a pilgrimage through the rooms in search of Bessie Langton. She did not know her way about well. Even those three rooms were very confusing to her, and it was quite half an hour before, a trifle weary and dispirited, she returned, unsuccessful, to her ottoman. She sat down on the side facing the door, and kept her eyes fixed on the entrance. She noticed, without paying any special attention to it, the figure of a man standing alone near the turnstile, evidently, like herself, waiting for some one's arrival. He stood with his back towards Richenda, very patiently watching the little stream of people who came in. Several times Richenda's eyes wandered; and she took one more little rapid walk through the rooms; but whenever she looked in that direction he was still there. She had become quite interested in the man whose fate was so evidently the same as her own, when all at once he turned, and Richenda saw that it was Sir Roderick Graeme who was coming slowly into the hall. He did not see Richenda. His eyes were fixed on something on the opposite wall above the level of her head.

Richenda was divided between three feelings. A wonder whether he would know her in her different dress; a hope that he would not recognise her; and again a hope that he would. The three were all struggling for the mastery when Sir Roderick lowered his eyes suddenly, and saw her.

Richenda tried to remember afterwards what sort of look it was that she had seen flash into them, but she did not think about it at the time. She was quite disengaged and rather amused as she wondered what he would do.

As she met his eyes Richenda bowed instinctively, a little dignified bow such as might have been given by any one of the women of Sir Roderick's own set, and apparently quite as instinctively he lifted his hat.

His manner was a trifle embarrassed

and uncertain; he seemed to be not quite sure of his ground.

He came up to her.

"How do you do?" he said. "I did not know—are the children here?"

Richenda laughed. Having bowed and so almost involuntarily committed herself, she felt that there was no course open to her but to go on in the way she had thus begun. She could not after that bow relapse into the servant. However much it might have been her duty to do so, she had cut off the possibility.

"Oh, no," she said. "It is my holiday, and I am here all by myself. I am waiting for a friend who has not appeared."

"So am I," he responded eagerly.

It seemed a trivial thing to produce such an effect, but Richenda's laugh had, as it were, set the position between the two. The young man's embarrassment dropped from him suddenly; he took up without hesitation the part marked out for him by the pretty matter-of-course assurance of the sound.

"I've been waiting nearly an hour," he said, "for another fellow who was coming to help me do my duty by these pictures. But I don't suppose for a moment he'll turn up now. Have you done the pictures?" he added, "Or are you going round without your friend?"

"No," said Richenda, "I've not seen anything. I don't quite know what to do. I don't think I shall wait any longer."

"Oh, but you won't go away without seeing the pictures, will you?"

"I don't think I shall wait," repeated Richenda a little dispiritedly. She had looked forward so much to her holiday, and now it seemed doomed to end in nothing but disappointment.

Sir Roderick was standing in front of Richenda looking down at her. For a moment he seemed to hesitate.

"There's a picture you ought to see," he said at length. "It's one of that new man's, you know; everybody has been talking about it a lot. It's awfully good, they say. Will you—do you care to come and have a look at it?"

Richenda hesitated for a moment. Then she rose suddenly, and gathered up her sunshade and catalogue composedly. There was a little excited flush going and coming in her cheeks, but her voice was as composed as her movements, as she said simply:

"Thank you. I should like to see it, certainly."

"We may as well fight our way to it, then," he said smilingly.

But there was no "fighting" actually in the question. The rooms were growing very full, but there was really plenty of room to move about; and Richenda did not stand in any literal need of the skilful elbowing by which her companion made way for her among the people.

"Do you like pictures?" Sir Roderick said as they entered the first room.

"I don't know anything about them, I'm afraid!" she answered with a little smile.

"Neither do I," he returned confidentially. "Not a thing! I know what I like, that's all! And the things I like never are by any chance the things I ought to like, don't you know?"

"What does it matter?" said Richenda gaily. "What is the use of having likes and dislikes if one mayn't use them as one wishes? There's room for a great deal more originality in the world."

"It's awfully nice of you to put it like that!" he returned. "It's quite gratifying to be made out to be original, instead of being called an outer barbarian because one can't swallow purple skies and straw-coloured hair! I've listened to such rotten talk about pictures! But, look here, we aren't giving our mind to our duty!"

The two had walked, during Sir Roderick's words, half across the first room, and had, it seemed, instinctively directed their steps to the ottoman in the middle.

"This won't do, you know!" he added.

"If we once sit down we shall never get through the show. It's fatal. Let's go religiously round, and then we can talk them over in peace, or forget them if we want to. Will you have my catalogue?" he added. "Oh, you've got one!" as Richenda smilingly opened her own.

"Very well, let's fire away! Number one's in that direction, if I'm not mistaken."

They went through the first twenty pictures or so in absorbed concentration; Richenda carefully referred from every number on every picture to its corresponding description in the catalogue, with her whole mind exercised in scrupulously seeing everything. Her slight figure had never looked more graceful or more girlish than it looked at this moment, as, with her pretty head in its simple hat bent first over her catalogue and then thrown back with a quick movement, she moved slowly along from picture to picture. Her grace, and a certain originality about her beauty, made her,



in spite of her rigidly simple frock, conspicuous among the crowd of smartly dressed women who moved round the room with her, and a great many pairs of eyes were fixed upon the charming, unpretending little grey figure. Sir Roderick discovered this fact very suddenly.

During the ten minutes or so that Richenda had spent in studying the pictures he had been occupied in studying her. He could not have said how he began to do so—or why, but his position, a little behind hers, had given him an excellent opportunity of looking, unobserved, at his companion. And after his cursory inspection of the first few pictures he had fixed his eyes on Richenda. He had never removed them again until a movement of hers made him fancy that she was about to turn to speak to him. Then he hurriedly looked away from her, to become aware of what he angrily called “the insolent idiots” who were interested in her also. He could not have said why he was angry with the men and women in question, nor did he trouble his head to think; he simply moved a little nearer to Richenda, prepared to speak to her. He meant, he said to himself, to show the world in general that he “would not have her stared at!”

But his intention was frustrated by Richenda herself. She turned her pretty face to him smilingly.

“Look!” she said, “is that the sort of picture one ought to like? I think it’s lovely.”

The picture in question was an evening landscape, the colouring was very orthodox, and the sentiment of the whole thing was very simple and peaceful.

“I don’t know anything about ‘ought,’” he said, “but that’s just what I like! We seem to like exactly the same sort of thing!”

Richenda looked at him; there was a little pleased smile of acquiescence on her face, a little light in her eyes.

“So we do!” she exclaimed. Then she applied herself to the study of her catalogue again rather diligently; a pink flush mounted to the roots of her hair, and they finished the rest of that room in silence.

On entering the next room Sir Roderick sturdily refused to make a deliberate round.

“We’ve done our duty by the others,” he said, “They are all the same; let us go for the big picture.”

Richenda assented and they made their way through the crowd to the “big picture.” It was simple enough; if it had not been

the work of a new and unconventional painter it might have been called commonplace. It was the old, old story in its most ordinary form: a coy, reluctant girl had just made up her mind to accept the eager young man who was looking so anxiously into her face. The figures were in startlingly striking dress, but the faces were clever.

Sir Roderick and Richenda stood and looked at it in silence.

“Awfully nice for him,” Sir Roderick said at last.

As he spoke he looked down at Richenda, and something in his tone gave his words a meaning for her. They seemed to thrill her curiously, and she felt herself grow first cold and then hot all over. It was ridiculous, she told herself.

“Will you come and sit down?” she said to Sir Roderick. “I believe I’m rather tired.”

“I’m most awfully sorry,” he said anxiously. “Come and find a comfortable seat. I’ve walked you about too much, that’s what it is.”

He established her most carefully on an ottoman nearly opposite the picture, and sat down beside her. A little silence ensued. Richenda was still looking at the picture opposite to her. Suddenly she gave a little exclamation.

“Oh!” she said; “do you see that picture up there, on the right-hand side of the big one? It’s just like a bit of the road at home.”

“At home?” repeated Sir Roderick gently, his eyes following hers to a little sketch of country road in the winter moonlight.

“Yes, at my home,” she repeated eagerly.

“I mean, it was my home.”

A keen light dawned in Sir Roderick’s eyes; the light of interest.

“Where was it?” he asked.

“Home? Oh, it was in Hampshire. Farnbridge is where we used to live when father was alive.”

Richenda’s beautiful eyes were soft with thought. She was evidently far away from the New Gallery and from the man by her side. He looked at her curiously.

“Your father is dead, then?” he said sympathetically. “And you are quite alone?”

“Yes,” Richenda answered simply. “I mean, father died two years ago nearly. But I’m not alone. I’ve got the boys, you know.”

“Are the boys your brothers?”

Sir Roderick's voice was as much interested as were his eyes. He was watching Richenda's face intently. It was changing so rapidly; it had altered in the last few minutes from its ordinary self-possession to an eager girlishness he had not seen in it before.

"Oh, yes! They're my brothers!" she said. "Jack—he's the eldest, you know—wants to be a doctor so dreadfully. I do hope we shall be able to manage it somehow for him! And the twins, Bobby and Jim, you know, they're at school, too; but they're only quite young still, so I don't know what they want to be; they don't know themselves. But whatever they are, any of them, I'm going to live with them all some day and keep house for them. Oh, it will be so lovely! And I shall be so economical, and manage their money so nicely. And I'm going to save my own to help buy some furniture!"

"Great Scott!" Sir Roderick spoke under his breath. Richenda's castle in the air seemed to the young man so pathetic in its modesty. "To think that such a girl as she is," he said to himself, "should have nothing to look forward to but keeping house for three uninteresting brothers, and one of them a struggling doctor! Heavens, what a life!"

A sudden longing shot across Sir Roderick's heart; a wild notion it was, and quite insane, he told himself afterwards. He was seized with a great desire to keep in his own life the girl whose sweetness and simplicity had attracted him in this past hour more than any other qualities in any other woman had attracted him before; to have her speak of him and think of him as she spoke of these three brothers of hers.

"I do believe," he said to himself slowly, "that I could make her happy."

While he was thinking all this, Richenda had pulled out her watch.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, with a little start of dismay. "Oh, it's a quarter to six! I was to be in by six, and I forgot all about the time! What shall I do? What will Mrs. Fitzgerald say?"

The last words sent a figurative dash of cold water on to Sir Roderick's thoughts and misgivings. With a great start he remembered that the girl to whom he had been talking all the afternoon; the girl he had found so attractive; was, after all, only in the position of a paid servant. The realisation was a shock to him, and for a moment it swept away every other

idea, and he could think of nothing else. The next moment a strong rush of reaction took possession of his heart and brain. What did such things as that matter, when a girl was so nice, and so sweet, and a lady, he said to himself. It was all arbitrary nonsense.

But, this reactionary impulse subsided as quickly as it had arisen. Sir Roderick's life and position had surrounded him with a fence of conventionalities far too strong to be trodden down so rapidly. It was a pity, he thought, a dreadful pity, but after all it was so, and it must be all right. He had been very silly about her, and it was just as well he had recollected himself in time. That was all.

But the satisfying reasonableness of this last reflection did not seem to convey itself to him forcibly enough to give him any great amount of self-possession. His manner and his voice were both very embarrassed as he turned to Richenda, and said confusedly:

"Oh, is it? I'm awfully sorry you must go! Had you better have a cab, or will you catch an omnibus all right?"

Richenda could scarcely believe her ears. His hesitating, uncertain air and voice were altogether irreconcilable with those of the man who had spent the afternoon with her, and made it so pleasant to her hitherto. She looked at him for one moment in blank surprise. Then, all at once, she understood.

She rose quickly and gathered up her belongings.

"I'll come and see you into your omnibus," he said half deprecatingly.

"No, thank you," she said coldly. "I can manage perfectly well. Good-bye."

She made him the coldest, stiffest little bow, and pointedly did not see that he was prepared to shake hands. Then she turned away, hurried out into Regent Street, and caught her omnibus. But as she sat in the top corner of it, her face turned steadily towards the horses, one or two burning tears fell down her hot cheeks on to her grey glove.

#### CHAPTER VIII.

"VERONICA! Veronica! What in the world are you doing?"

It was late in the afternoon on the day after Richenda's "afternoon out." The three children were in their mother's boudoir, as she especially liked to call it—a small room opening out of the back drawing-room. There was nothing more artistic or less incongruous about it than

about the drawing-room itself; indeed, except for a large carved overmantel with a mirror on it, very little attempt at decoration of any sort was visible. But no money had been spared, evidently, in making it all its possessor wished it to be with respect to comfort. The chairs, sofas, cushions, lights, were all of the most expensively luxurious kind. It had double windows to shut out, if necessary, the noise of the street, and electric bells and speaking tubes made contact with the rest of the house the work of a moment only.

It was in her boudoir that Mrs. Fitzgerald received her most intimate friends to tea. It was in her boudoir that her most privileged men friends were allowed to smoke and play cards, when the fancy seized their hostess that they should do so. And it was in her boudoir that Mrs. Fitzgerald ensconced herself on days when she did not care to go out; and here, when she was "not at home," she pursued, in the easiest chair in the room, the study of modern French—in novels.

It was by no means unusual for the children to be with her here. Mrs. Fitzgerald was not quite the conventional society mother who never sees her children from one month's end to another. She was, in an injudicious and erratic fashion, very fond indeed of the three pretty little things who called her mother. She was proud of their pretty faces, and felt them to be a distinctly interesting possession, when they did not annoy her. Therefore, though she never let their claims upon her interfere in the least with any engagement she found more amusing, she took pleasure in having them with her once a day, when she was at home and felt inclined to do so.

For more than ten days, however, she had seen very little of them; a rush of engagements had kept her in a whirl which left her no time or thought for the children. To-day, though the rush was not by any means over, a brief lull had come; Mrs. Fitzgerald found herself at home with no prospect of callers, and two hours to spare before she dressed for a select little theatre dinner at a restaurant, to which she was going, and she had had the children brought down to her in the boudoir for an hour. After half an hour's intercourse with them, however, Brian's good temper, never his strongest point, began to flag slightly; his mother instantly discovered that he was amusing no longer. In this conclusion the two innocent girls were included also, and forthwith their mother swept them all off

her lap and out of her chair with an impulsive command to them to "go and play in the balcony." The trio had obediently trotted through the open window into the little fern-filled space outside the window. It was a small square balcony, roofed and protected with glass; the children were perfectly safe there, and Mrs. Fitzgerald had settled herself down in the corner of a sofa and had taken up "The World" with a sigh of relief. For ten minutes she had enjoyed unbroken peace and contentment. But her peace had been broken in upon by loud and aggrieved tones; she had looked up angrily, to see Veronica sitting immovable on the threshold of the window, while Brian, from behind, apparently vainly reasoned and expostulated with her on the desire he felt for her removal from that place and position.

"Veronica!" repeated Mrs. Fitzgerald angrily, as no answer came to her first question, "can't you be quiet? I simply can't and won't have you here if you are such plagues! Why on earth can't you and Brian agree? You're the eldest!"

"We're not unagreeing, mother!"

This answer to Mrs. Fitzgerald's somewhat illogical reasoning came in the most excited tones of her little high voice from Veronica.

"We're not unagreeing one bit! It's only a play-game. I'm being nurse and Brian's being Mr. Kennaway. That's all!"

"The World" dropped from Mrs. Fitzgerald's hands, and she raised herself into a more upright position in her corner.

"What do you mean, child?" she said with a good deal of irritation in her voice. The children's games always irritated her more than they amused her; she couldn't trouble to understand them, she said; and the fact that they should have coupled together in this particular game Richenda Leicester and Mr. Kennaway considerably increased the irritation. "What idiots children are!" she said to herself. "What nonsense you talk!" she continued sharply to Veronica. "Why can't you play a reasonable game? Yours strikes me as very silly indeed!"

Veronica had risen, and she and Brian were facing their mother through the window. They were just a trifle startled at the sharpness of their mother's tone.

"It's a true game, mother—a quite real game! They did just like it one day; they truly did," Veronica said.

"Who did just like what? What are you talking of?"

Mrs. Fitzgerald wheeled herself round on the sofa and looked at the little trio of faces in the window.

"Nurse and Mr. Kennaway. He spoke ever so much. He tried to make her to walk about, I b'lieve; but she never spoke to him, not once. She wouldn't!"

"But what—where have you—where did you see Mr. Kennaway, Veronica? I can't imagine what you mean."

"It was a long ago day," said Brian. "A very long ago day! It was very hot, and it was in South Kensington Museum. And he comed and talked to us and to nurse, and nurse wouldn't talk to him at all. It was very funny. So we was playing at it."

There was a pause after Brian's little explanation. It had been delivered rather breathlessly and both he and Veronica looked alarmed. They thought from their mother's tone that they had been doing something wrong. And they, small as they were, had heavy experience of their mother's scoldings. But there was an expression, at the same time, of blank wonder in both their round childish eyes.

"Are you angry with us for playing a true real game, mother?" asked Veronica at length. She had to wait some little time for her answer, and when it came it was sharply spoken.

"No; I'm not angry. You're silly; very silly children, though. Come out of the window, Brian, and ring for Kate to come and fetch you. I'm going now."

Mrs. Fitzgerald swept out of the room; leaving the children a good deal awed and startled. She went straight up to her own dressing-room, and began, mechanically, to inspect the preparations her maid had made for dressing her. Then she glanced at the little clock on the mantelpiece, saw that she had still a quarter of an hour to spare, and settled herself on her dressing-room sofa as comfortably as she had settled herself in her boudoir. But her face was by no means so placid as it had been a quarter of an hour before. All its slight pretension to beauty was annihilated in a very unbecoming frown, and her small eyes shone more and more angrily. She cast enquiring glances at her own reflection, as shown in a long mirror at the foot of the sofa; and her much disquieted face smoothed a little. Then it clouded again, more darkly than before, nor did it change again until, the quarter of an hour being ended, Mrs. Fitzgerald rose from her sofa, and rang her bell determinedly.

"I don't choose it!" she said, as she did so. "I won't have it go on. I shall speak to her, to-morrow, very severely."

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## HOME NOTES

AND  
ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

**MOCK TURTLE SOUP.**—Purchase a calf's head. Have it scraped and cleaned, removing the brains and tongue, and cutting the head into four or five pieces. Put these into a stewpan with the skin side up to prevent sticking. Add four quarts of cold water, and heat this slowly, skimming it thoroughly. Add one tablespoonful of salt, and simmer about two hours, or until the meat slips easily from the bones. Remove the meat, and place smoothly on a plate, so that it may be easily cut into dice when cool. Reserve the remainder of the meat to make forcemeat balls, if desired. Put the bones on to boil again, adding a bouquet of herbs, two small onions, one carrot, one turnip, one head of celery, six allspices, six cloves, and six peppercorns. Simmer this until reduced to two quarts, strain and set it away to cool. This can be made the previous day. Half an hour before the dinner is served, remove the fat, put the stock on to boil, and season with one saltspoonful each of ground thyme or marjoram and pepper, and one teaspoonful of salt. Make a brown thickening with two tablespoonfuls of butter, browned, two teaspoonfuls of cornflour or flour, and one pint of brown stock. Stir this into the stock, and add the meat cut into half-inch cubes. Boil three eggs twenty minutes, and cut them into half-inch slices, or form the yolks into egg balls. Put them into the tureen with the forcemeat balls, add the soup, and serve very hot with thin slices of lemon. If you have no brown stock, boil one pound of lean beef with the head, and use the head stock with the flour and butter thickening. This soup may be made from the calves' feet and one or two pounds of lean veal. The feet should be soaked and scalded, boiled in four quarts of water with the herbs and spices until the water is reduced to two quarts. Strain and use as directed above, making forcemeat balls of the veal, and meat dice from the gelatinous meat of the feet. Mock-turtle soup is quite as often served without the forcemeat balls, so these can be omitted if preferred.

**LEMON CUSTARD.**—Three well-beaten eggs, three cups of milk, three-fourths of a cup of sugar, and a tablespoonful of lemon extract. Bake in custard dish.

**FORCEMEAT BALLS FOR SOUP.**—These are made with one cupful of any cooked meat chopped very fine. To this add one saltspoonful each of salt and thyme, one half saltspoonful of pepper, one teaspoonful of lemon juice, and one teaspoonful of chopped parsley. Beat the yolk of one egg, and add enough to moisten the meat. Make it into balls the size of a nutmeg, place in a soup plate, sprinkle with flour, and roll about until well covered with it. Put one tablespoonful of butter into an omelette pan, and when brown, put in the balls, and shake the pan occasionally until they are browned.

**CHRISTMAS GAME PIE.**—Make paste for meat pie, have smooth and stiff, fold in a damp cloth, and lay on ice for an hour. Line a raised pie-dish with thinly rolled paste. Rub well all over with butter. Put a top crust on, ornament the centre with leaves and flowers of the pastry, and bake. When done, take out, remove the top crust, brush the inside with a beaten egg, set back in the oven until glazed. For filling for the pie, take partridges, rabbits, or other small game, and cut up in pieces, put in a frying-pan with butter, and fry until brown. Then take up, put into a saucepan with some rich soup stock, mushrooms to flavour, a tablespoonful each of walnut and tomato ketchup, a wineglassful of currant jelly, the juice of a lemon, half-a-dozen cloves, with salt and pepper, and simmer until very tender. Let cool, pour in the crust with the gravy, cover the top with aspic jelly, and lay on the upper crust. This pie will keep some time in cold weather, and is convenient and delicious.

**RICE FRITTERS.**—Take one pint of cold boiled rice, squeeze through the patent potato press, add two eggs well beaten, and one tablespoonful of flour to thicken, and fry with butter or oil on a hot griddle.

**TO PREPARE HASH ON TOAST.**—Take small bits of cold meat, one pint of hot water, thicken with two tablespoonfuls of flour, a good sized piece of butter, pinch of salt. Turn over toasted bread and serve immediately.

**RICE WAFFLES.**—One gill of rice, three gills of flour, one ounce of butter, three eggs, a little salt. Boil the rice until tender; add the butter, flour, salt, and yolks of the eggs (previously beaten light), after which the mixture must be beaten very hard. Have the whites of the eggs very light, stir in gently, then bake. Butter; serve hot.

## ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

**SHREWSBURY CAKES.**—Mix together half a pound of flour, a quarter of a pound of sugar, six ounces of butter, one egg, and a teaspoonful of powdered mace and cinnamon. The butter and sugar are rubbed well into the flour, which is moistened with the egg, and, if necessary, by the addition of a very small quantity of water, sufficient to form it into a paste, which then roll out to a moderate thickness, cut into round cakes, and bake in a quick oven.

**EGG CUTLETS.**—Egg cutlets are a delicious dainty, and are as palatable, while much less expensive, than sweetbreads or other delicate meat dishes. To make from four to six cutlets requires three hard-boiled eggs, one cupful of milk, one tablespoonful of chopped parsley, one tablespoonful of butter, and two tablespoonfuls of flour. Cover the eggs with boiling water and simmer them for half an hour in a covered saucepan. Heat the milk, rub together the butter and flour, add to the milk, and stir until it is a thick smooth mixture; season with half a teaspoonful of onion, finely minced, and the parsley. Shell the eggs, cut them or chop them fine, and mix well with the sauce, turn on to a buttered platter and set aside in a very cold place. Then flour the hands and moulding-board, take a small quantity of the mixture and mould it into the shape of a small cutlet about an inch thick. When ready to fry, the cutlets are to be coated with egg and then with fine dry bread crumbs, laid a few at a time in the frying-pan and browned in boiling fat. The cutlets are served with a white sauce garnished with green peas. To make the sauce, blend a tablespoonful of butter, the same quantity of flour, and a cupful of milk or cream, and when smooth season with half a teaspoonful of salt, a dash of white pepper, and half a cupful of cooked green peas. Pour the sauce around, not over, the cutlets.

**TURKEY ENTRÉE.**—Cut the remains of a roast turkey into pieces as if for curry. Put into a stewpan with enough stock to cover it, season highly with pepper and salt. Simmer slowly for half an hour, then take out the meat and put the gravy through a strainer. Make a purée of four tomatoes (tinned ones answer very well), and add a few pickled capscums, well pounded. Put altogether back in the stewpan, after having rubbed a bit of garlic round it; let the mixture slowly boil up and serve. A little ground coriander seed is considered an improvement if the flavour is liked.

**CHESTNUT FORCEMEAT.**—To stuff a good-sized fowl, take a dozen or a dozen and a half chestnuts, roast and peel the nuts, and then put them into a saucepan with some good veal gravy. Let them boil in this for fifteen or twenty minutes, then drain off the gravy, and when they are quite cold pound them with the liver of the fowl. Now take a tablespoonful of grated ham, a teaspoonful of black pepper, a piece of lemon peel grated, a very little cayenne pepper, and two large tablespoonfuls of bread crumbs. Mix them well in the mortar with the chestnuts and fowl's liver, and moisten the whole with the beaten yolks of two eggs and two ounces of butter.

**EXTERMINATING MOTH.**—Moths will work in carpets in rooms that are kept warm in winter as well as in the summer. A sure method of removing the pests is to pour strong alum-water on the floor to the distance of half a yard around the edges before laying the carpets. Then once or twice during the season sprinkle dry salt over the carpet before sweeping. Insects do not like salt, and sufficient adheres to the carpet to prevent their alighting on it.

**A GOOD WAY TO COOK CABBAGE** is the French method, which is as follows: Chop some cold boiled white cabbage, and then place in a saucepan and stir in some melted butter (about two tablespoonfuls), add pepper and salt to taste. After the cabbage is heated through, add two well-beaten eggs, then turn the mixture into a frying-pan. Stir it until it is hot, and of a delicate brown on the underside. Place a hot dish over it, and when ready to send it to table turn the frying-pan upside down, so that the brown or crust part will be on the top, thus making a pretty-looking dish.

**LEMON CAKE.**—Mix together half a pound of powdered sugar, the same weight of flour, the grated rind of a lemon, two ounces of butter, and form into a paste with two well-beaten eggs; roll out thin, lay it on a buttered tin, and bake. It can be cut into small squares or any preferred shape, which should then be piled crosswise on the dish.

**SALLY CAKE.**—Beat up five eggs, leaving out half the number of whites, add the rind of a small lemon grated fine, a quarter of a pound of flour, and half a pound of sugar; just at the last add the juice of two lemons. Butter the cake-tin well, put in the mixture, and bake for two hours. Seville oranges can be used instead of lemons.

**CURE OF OBESITY.**—Mr. F. C. Russell, of Woburn House, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C., has long been famous for his remedy for the cure of obesity. Those who suffer from this difficulty will, by sending 4d. to the above address, receive Mr. Russell's pamphlet, containing testimonials from a great number of persons who have been benefited by the treatment, as well as a recipe for it. It matters not what be the weather or season, those who are troubled suffer equally in hot weather and in cold; in summer they are overburdened by their own weight, in winter bronchial ailments are set up through the least cold, as the air tubes are not free to act, as they would otherwise do without the obstruction. Mr. Russell undertakes that persons under his treatment should lose one stone a month in weight, and that their health, strength, and activity should be regenerated.

*The following are extracts from other journals:*

**A POSITIVE REMEDY FOR CORPULENCE.**—Any remedy that can be suggested as a cure or alleviation for stoutness will be heartily welcomed. We have recently received a well-written book, the author of which seems to know what he is talking about. It is entitled "Corpulency and the Cure" (256 pages), and is a cheap issue (only 4d.), published by Mr. F. C. Russell, of Woburn House, 27, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C. Our space will not do justice to this book; send for it yourself. It appears that Mr. Russell has submitted all kinds of proofs to the English Press. The editor of "The Tablet," the Catholic organ, writes: "Mr. Russell does not give us the slightest loophole for a doubt as to the value of his cure, for in the most straightforward and matter-of-fact manner he submitted some hundreds of original and unsolicited testimonial letters for our perusal, and offered us plenty more if required. To assist him to make this remedy known, we think we cannot do better than publish quotations from some of the letters submitted. The first one, a marchioness, writes from Madrid:—'My son, Count —, has reduced his weight in twenty-two days 16 kilos—i.e., 34 lbs.' Another writes:—'So far (six weeks from the commencement of following your system) I have lost fully two stone in weight.' The next (a lady) writes:—'I am just half the size.' A

fourth:—'I find it is successful in my case. I have lost 8 lbs. in weight since I commenced (two weeks).' Another writes:—'A reduction of 18 lbs. in a month is a great success.' A lady from Bournemouth writes:—'I feel much better, have less difficulty in breathing, and can walk about.' Again, a lady says:—'It reduced me considerably, not only in the body, but all over.' The author is very positive. He says:—"Step on a weighing machine on Monday morning and again on Tuesday, and I guarantee that you have lost 2 lbs. in weight without the slightest harm, and vast improvement in health through ridding the system of unhealthy accumulations."—"Cork Herald."

**CURE FOR OBESITY AT LAST.**—Now Monsieur Pasteur and great Mr. Koch, and all other "made in Germany" cures, look well to your laurels. We have now an Englishman who has discovered a real remedy for corpulence. The proof of this is demonstrated by a person stepping on a weighing-machine in twenty-four hours after commencing his treatment. Not so with your "dog-bite" business, M. Pasteur, and not so with your bacillic exterminator, Mr. Koch. The results of your investigations are comparatively cloudy. Who knows whether a person, for instance, would have died from hydrophobia, and how is it that the inoculation is admitted to fail on many occasions? Simply because the "cure" is not perfect. Now let all fat persons read "Corpulency and the Cure" (256 pages), published by F. C. Russell, our British Specialist, of Woburn House, 27, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C., price only 4d., but worth twenty times as much. There you will find that an English chemist can remove 14 lbs. of superfluous fat and waste from the system in seven days with herbs which you can gather in our British meadows. He has likewise shown the Continental theorists that their doctrines are untenable when they say that to reduce fat one must eat and drink less. The wind is completely out of their sails, for patients under Mr. Russell's treatment become more healthy, and their appetite improves immediately after the removal of the first 2 lbs. of unhealthy accumulation, and this happens in about twenty-four hours. Send for this book. We have just had it brought under our notice; it is well worth reading.—"Dover Express."

**CONSUMPTION AND ITS CURE.**—Sir James Paget, in delivering the inaugural lecture of the winter session of the Abernethian Society a few years ago, remarked that in medicine, "what we want is an accumulation of more plain facts, facts decided again and again and made quite sure." Sir James might, we think, have extended the sphere of his remarks somewhat, for we want "facts" in every item of our daily life, just as much as we do in medicine. Curiously enough the words quoted above reached us as we were looking through the latest edition of Dr. Alabone's book, "The Cure of Consumption,"\* and we could not help wondering if the eminent medical baronet had grasped the stupendous fact that a real and permanent cure for consumption was now within the reach of every human being.

We have become so used to looking upon this disease as being of an incurable nature that it is not easy at first to believe the assertion made by Dr. Alabone, of Lynton House, Highbury Quadrant, to the contrary, but the evidence he is able to produce is so overwhelming that the greatest sceptic who ever drew breath could scarcely help being convinced of the bonâ fide nature of the cures. How many scores of thousands of our countrymen have fallen victims to this disease we shall never know, but we rejoice to think that we have now, owing to the discoveries made by Dr. Alabone, a weapon of defence within our grasp which has been tried exhaustively, and has come triumphantly through the test of many thousands of cases. Dr. Alabone has for more than twenty years made a special study of chest diseases, during which time he has laboured hard to discover the "facts" underlying them.

That he has been rewarded with most abundant success will be patent to any one who reads his interesting book. He has had to encounter opposition and scepticism on every hand, but strong in his knowledge of the "facts," he has borne down opposition, and compelled sceptics to acknowledge the truth and justice of his claim that he has cured bad cases of consumption. Dr. Alabone has been greatly encouraged by the many flattering letters he has received from cured and grateful patients, who had been given up as incurable by

their regular medical men. A very large number of the cases quoted in the book are patients who were looked upon as incurable by some of the most eminent men in the medical profession, many of them showing that even three or four doctors in consultation could give no hope of saving the life of the patient.

Perhaps, though, the strongest and most convincing testimony is to be found in the "fact" that many doctors afflicted with chest diseases have themselves undergone the treatment prescribed by Dr. Alabone with so much success that they have adopted it in their own practices, for Dr. Alabone's treatment is one that is open to every physician in the world to adopt and incorporate in his own practice if he is so disposed.

The "fact" that Consumption is now curable should infuse joy and vigour into the hearts of thousands of sufferers from this dread disease. In Dr. Alabone's book we find much that is interesting, useful, and practical. We have seen for ourselves many of the original letters from former patients, thanking Dr. Alabone for his treatment, and we know personally of cases in which it has proved to be of the very greatest service to our own friends. We have therefore no hesitation whatever in advising any of our readers who may be suffering from chest complaints to procure a copy of this book and investigate some of the cases for themselves, feeling sure that they will have abundant reason to thank us for our few words of timely advice.

**SOAP.**—Dust and dirt accumulate wonderfully, more especially in large towns, and it means cleaning and wiping up day in, day out, if you would keep the home sweet and nice. Watson's Matchless Cleanser is a soap that every housewife should have used in her home, for it is wonderfully cleansing, materially lessens labour, and smells so sweet and clean. It is usable in hard, soft, cold, or hot water, is invaluable for all scouring purposes, and really indispensable to the laundress, for it loosens the dirt and stains in linen, without the laborious rubbing; thus the clothes wear longer, look whiter, and the day's washing is actually got through in half the time it used to be. Watson's Matchless Cleanser Soap is sold in one pound bars, consisting of two tablets, which bear the trade mark of a Ram's Head, and those not familiar with this "household treasure" should ask their grocer or Italian ware-houseman for it.

\* "The Cure of Consumption, Chronic Bronchitis, and Asthma," by Edwin W. Alabone, M.D. Phil. U.S.A.: D.Sc.; ex. M.R.C.S. Eng., 1870, by exam.: Lynton House, Highbury Quadrant, London, N. Price 2s. 6d., post free of author.



